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A determination of the collimation correction is made for each night's work, and three of the zenith point and level, by nadir.

The places of various short lists of comparison stars have been determined; and with the observations made for special investigations, and for clock corrections on a few nights other than those used for regular observing, 2300 observations have been made during the year. R. H. T.

July 27, 1894.

FOREST FIRES AT MOUNT HAMILTON, JULY 29 TO AUGUST 3, 1894.

The forest fires of 1891 have been spoken of in these *Publications*, Vol. III, page 292, and Vol. V, page 109. A poor reproduction of a good photograph of the great fire on Mount Santa Ysabel is printed in Vol. V, facing page 61. These fires burned around a semi-circle from north (through east) to south; they were never nearer than 4000 feet to the Observatory; and they were confined by our work or otherwise to the further slopes of the mountains round about.

Some time on July 28 or 29, 1894, a fire started in a deep cañon to the west of the Observatory and to the north of the brick-yard. Its smoke was very obvious all day, Sunday, July 29. On Monday the Observatory workmen, with one volunteer, cut a narrow trail from a point above the fire down to the trout stream in the bottom of Cañon Negro, which lies north and northeast of the Observatory peak. This trail was between the forest fire and the Observatory, and beyond the trail back fires were set to widen the line of protection. On Tuesday morning Mr. MACDONALD, machinist of the LICK Observatory, went twice over this line from its beginning to the trout stream (some 1500 feet below the summit) and found no place in which the forest fire had crossed our back fires. At noon on Tuesday, however, the fire had crossed the line, and was making great progress towards the Observatory, and especially towards the wooden cottages near the Observatory and the wooden stables and sheds. Fortunately, a considerable space below these buildings along the road to the springs—Aquarius—had been cleared of trees and brush in 1891. This space was once more quickly cleared off and a line of back fires set along the Aquarius road. More men were sent for, and during Tuesday and Wednesday (day and night) there were some forty persons employed in fighting the fire (including all the astronomers of the LICK Observatory). About two miles of back fires were set and controlled. No damage whatever was done to any of the wooden cottages, to the stables, to the house of the United States Coast and Goedetic Survey, to the water tanks, to the engine and pump houses at the springs. These were protected by our labor. The buildings of the LICK Observatory were certainly at no time in danger. It is probable that we rather under-estimate than over-estimate the risk from such fires as these. Unless the winds are very high* (say 30 miles per hour and upwards), it seems easy to control a forest fire of which one has had sufficient warning. With high winds carrying large sparks it is almost impossible to defend long lines or large areas. In such cases the wise course is to defend buildings and their immediate surroundings and to let the rest go. At the worst, we only lose a few hundred acres of the *chapparal*, which renews itself within a few years. In one respect the present fire was vastly easier to manage than those of 1891. It was so near to the buildings that the water supply of the LICK Observatory could be and was utilized. After using all that was necessary there remained: In COPERNICUS reservoir, 15,000 gallons; in KEPLER reservoir, 122,000 gallons; in HUYGHENS' reservoir about 50,000 gallons, and a good supply at the springs.

Several photographs were taken by the astronomers in the intervals of their service at the fire, and it is hoped to reproduce one or more of them here. We become so used to the changed conditions of life at Mount Hamilton that it does not strike us as strange to see members of the University faculty in the rôle of firemen, not to say salamanders. To realize the incongruity it is necessary to shift the scene and to imagine the fire to be in Greenwich Park or at Enckeplatz, S. W., Berlin!

Efficiency is a virtue, wherever it is found, and the astronomers of the LICK Observatory may justly claim to be efficient in the theory and practice of fighting forest fires.

E. S. H.

LICK OBSERVATORY, 1894, August 4.

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* The highest wind velocity of Tuesday was 15 miles per hour at 11 P. M.; the highest of Wednesday was 20 miles from 3 to 8 A. M. and from 5 P. M. to 12 P. M.